Regional Review Committee Report

of findings with respect to the Formula Review Committee study prepared for the Nova Scotia Department of Education by Doane Raymond Management Consultants

Nova Scotia
Department of Education

October 31, 1990

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Department of Education

Senior Management

PO Box 578
Halifax, Nova Scotia
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October 31, 1990

Honourable Ronald C. Giffin, Q.C.
Minister of Education
Province of Nova Scotia
Halifax, Nova Scotia

Dear Mr. Giffin:

In accordance with your instructions, I wish to submit the Report of the Regional Review Committee regarding the Formula Review Committee Study prepared for the Nova Scotia Department of Education by Doane Raymond Management Consultants.

Yours truly,

John Levangie
Chair
Regional Review Committee

A NOTE OF THANKS

The Regional Review Committee wishes to express its gratitude to the many organizations and individuals who devoted so much time and effort to the preparation and presentation of briefs to the committee. The comments and constructive suggestions received through this process have made a major contribution to the search for improved means of funding public education in Nova Scotia.

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Purpose and Process

In the fall of 1989, the Minister of Education, Honourable Ronald C. Giffin, Q.C., commissioned the management consulting firm of Doane Raymond to conduct a study of the formulas used to provide funding for public education in Nova Scotia, and the mandate, structure and reporting relationships of the Formula Review Committee that had been established in 1981 to make recommendations to the Government on these formulas.

On March 30, 1990, the Minister tabled the report of the study in the House of Assembly and stated that comments and suggestions from interested groups and individuals would be obtained before any decisions were made by the Government of Nova Scotia on the recommendations in the Report. On June 19, 1990, the Minister announced that a series of hearings on the Report would be held in eight locations across the province during September and October of 1990. The specific purpose of these meetings would be:

to receive and discuss submissions regarding the recommendations in the Report; and

to receive and discuss other suggestions for improvements in existing funding formulas for district school boards.

The following Department of Education staff members were appointed to a Regional Review Committee to conduct the hearings and submit a report and recommendations to the Minister by October 31, 1990:

John Levangie, Chief Director, Finance and Budgeting (Chair)
Robert Haines, Chief Director, Education Programs
Gerrie Masters, Senior Policy Advisor and Assistant to the Deputy Minister
Richard Morris, Director, Public Education Grants and Finance

Other Department of Education staff members who assisted the committee at some or all of the meetings included:

Peter Lawson, Director of Inspection Services
Aubrey LeBlanc, Director, Curriculum Development (French Programs)
LaJune Naud, Director, Curriculum Development
Bette Kelly, Director, Research
Dennis Pilkey, Co-ordinator, Management Information Systems
David Keenan, Education Publication Officer
Divisional Inspectors of Schools
Audit Officers

At each of the locations, afternoon (1:00 - 4:00 p.m.) and evening (7:00 - 10:00 p.m.) sessions were scheduled. Although both sessions were open to the public, the afternoon hearings were devoted chiefly to presentations by school boards and municipal units. In advertisements announcing the hearings, those who wished to present formal briefs were asked to notify the committee at least ten days prior to the session. Because of the large number of requests from the Halifax area, it proved necessary to schedule an additional session in that region. In all other locations, the requests to make presentations were accommodated within the original schedule. Written briefs were invited from those who chose not to make presentations in person.

The locations and dates of the hearings were as follows:

École Secondaire de Clare, Meteghan River – September 18
Liverpool Regional High School – September 19
Riverview Rural High School, Cape Breton County – October 2
Strait Area Education-Recreation Centre, Port Hawkesbury – October 3
Bloomfield Centre, Antigonish – October 4
St. Patrick's High School, Halifax – October 9
Springhill High School – October 10
Coldbrook and District School, Kings County – October 11
St. Patrick's High School, Halifax – October 12

Overview of the Recommendations of the Formula Review Committee Study Prepared by Doane Raymond Management Consultants

The specific terms of reference of the study* performed by Doane Raymond Management Consultants were:

1. To review and comment on the structure, mandate and reporting relationships of the Formula Review Committee and the process followed by the committee in recommending funding formulas;

2. To assess the appropriateness of the existing funding formulas and, if necessary, propose alternative methods of financing both operating and capital requirements of school boards consistent with objectives of public education in Nova Scotia; and

3. To review and comment on the present accountability relationships between the provincial government, school boards and municipal units.

Formula Review Committee

The Report's recommendations were presented in three major sections in accordance with these terms of reference. The first section deals with the mandate, structure and process of the Formula Review Committee

From a recommendation in the Walker Commission Report of 1981, a committee known as the Formula Review Committee (FRC) was established to examine annually the funding formulas for public education and recommend funding rates to the Minister of Education.

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*For the sake of brevity, the *Formula Review Committee Study Prepared for the Nova Scotia Department of Education by Doane Raymond Management Consultants* will be generally referred to in this document as "the Report".

The Doane Raymond Report reviewed the mandate, structure and process of this committee. Based on this examination and interviews with some of the constituents of the education community, the authors of the Report concluded that, all things considered, the FRC concept provides an appropriate means for determining funding levels and allocating funds to school boards.

The Report, however, does recommend several changes in the structure of and process followed by the FRC.

In recognition of the need to consider more than just the amount and allocation of resources in the annual funding process, the Report suggests the present FRC be divided into two sub-committees. One would provide advice to the Minister of Education on how education programs are delivered and how programs/services are evaluated. The second would provide advice on the level and distribution of funding to the district school boards within guidelines suggested by Management Board.

An independent chairperson, appointed by the Minister of Education, would sit on both sub-committees and have overall responsibility for ensuring the committee carries out its mandate.

To reflect the wider mandate, the committee would be re-named the "Education and Funding Formula Review Committee."

The overall membership of the new committee would not be different from the present membership but the individuals would now be appointed to one of the sub-committees instead of sitting as one committee under the present structure.

The Education Sub-Committee would have voting members from the Nova Scotia School Boards Association, the Nova Scotia Teachers Union and the Department of Education. The Finance Sub-Committee would have voting members from the Union of Nova Scotia Municipalities, and the provincial

government departments of Municipal Affairs, Management Board and Education. Each representative would be appointed for a two-year term.

Each sub-committee would, for the most part, meet independently of the other. It is proposed that the Education Sub-Committee would meet in the first half of the year, with its work providing input to the Finance Sub-Committee which would meet during the second half of the year. The chairperson would oversee the preparation of an integrated annual report to the Minister.

The Report therefore endorses the present FRC membership but recommends an expanded scope of activity into educational areas and directs those members with a particular expertise or responsibility for education or finance to a respective sub-committee, rather than meeting as one group as has been the practice.

Funding Formulas

The Report's recommendations on the funding formulas are guided by several underlying features that are a part of the present funding arrangements and were supported by many of the persons interviewed by the authors of the Report.

These features are:

1. One master formula that shows no bias or favor to one board over another. This is the general formula which provides the largest portion of funding.

2. Global funding for a major portion of education grants, thereby giving district school boards latitude and flexibility in making operating decisions. Over 90% of the grants come under this category.

3. Recognition of circumstances or conditions that signal the need to make changes in the formulas, thereby encouraging uniformity and still observing the principle of affordability.

4. Shared funding between the Province and municipal units.

5. Central or FRC-based projections of district school board financial requirements to eliminate the variability that would occur if district school boards made their own projections.

6. A transportation formula that recognizes operating cost differences caused by geography or dispersion of students, thereby adhering to the principle of guaranteed access to education.

The Report concludes that all these features should be preserved, to the extent possible, in the development or refinement of funding formulas.

The Report supports the reinstatement of the original concept of supplementary funding. Prior to 1987, any revenue requirements beyond the funding formulas were provided 100% by the municipal units. In 1987, the concept of cost-shared supplementary funding was introduced in the funding formulas so that, on a sliding scale arrangement, both the Province and municipal units contributed towards supplementary funding if the FRC recommended a requirement for such funding.

The Report suggests reverting to the original concept of services in excess of a basic level being funded 100% by municipal units and therefore recommends the present cost shared supplementary funding arrangements be phased out.

To adopt this recommendation would require a definition of what constitutes a basic level of education or "core" that would be funded 100% from the mandatory funding formulas. The Report suggests this be done in

terms of establishing standards or targets for use of resources in providing educational programs/services.

The Department of Education would have the responsibility of defining the core. It is suggested in the Report that the Education Sub-Committee of the new Education and Funding Formula Review Committee would then develop a system to examine the delivery of public education to assist in determining the resources required for those programs/services, in terms of resource standards or targets.

The first formula considered in the Report is the ***general formula***. This has historically provided about 70% of total provincial/municipal funding and is composed of the provincial general formula grant and the mandatory municipal education tax.

The present provincial general formula grant is, for the most part, a student-based grant which provides a certain amount of funding per student. The municipal grant is an education tax based on the uniform property assessment within the municipality.

The Report does not suggest any changes to the concept of a mandatory municipal education tax portion of general formula funding. However, in connection with the recommended move to funding based on resource targets, the Report recommends the provincial general formula grant be replaced by a formula based on a pupil-teacher ratio (PTR).

The Report suggests that a PTR is the most appropriate resource target for administration and instruction expenditures at the school level, but indicates that that it would not be appropriate to have the same PTR target for all district school boards. Certain boards face difficulties in scheduling and configuring classes because of large geographical areas and wide dispersion of students and schools. The Report takes these factors into account in what is referred to as a *difficulty index*.

The PTR target would be adjusted by the various weighting factors of the difficulty index in determining each individual district school board's PTR target. The Report also recommends adjustments to the PTR target for factors related to Acadian districts and distant schools. Each district school board, therefore, would have a different PTR target for funding purposes.

Since the Report's recommended PTR-based general formula funding also contemplates the combination of special education programs and services with regular instruction, the PTR target would include special education teachers. At present, special education is funded through a separate, specific purpose grant.

For illustrative purposes, the Report demonstrated the changes that would have occurred to the recommended funding in 1989, if the formula had been based on a provincial target PTR of 17.25. The proposed formula would have seen a shift in funding among the district school boards. The Report's authors did not believe it would be feasible to introduce these shifts over a short period of time such as one year. It would probably be necessary to have a phase-in period for PTR targets to allow boards time to adjust.

The next recommendation concerns the **provincial property service grant**. At present, the grant is calculated so that approximately half the funding is based on student enrolments and half is based on the square footage of schools operated by the district board.

Again, the Report recommends a change to funding based on a resource standard or target which, in this case, would be a targeted level of square footage per student. For illustration purposes, the Report indicates the changes in funding that would occur to the recommended funding in 1989 if the average square footage per student, across the province, of 114 square feet was used as the target.

Changes are also recommended in the **provincial transportation grant**. At present, the grant is based on provincial funding of 100% of projected

transportation operating expenditures. The Report recommends that the funding instead be calculated at an established rate per loaded pupil mile based on the provincial average cost of operating a bus. (The term "loaded mile" is generally taken to mean mileage during which students are being transported.) Again, the grant would be a resource target-based formula.

Several years ago, calculation of transportation funding was based on loaded miles but was changed to the present method. Since loaded mile information was not available when the Report was written, it does not illustrate the changes that would have occurred if this new formula were implemented.

The final operating grant formula considered in the Report is the administrative services or **district school board management grant**. At present, district board management expenditures are funded from the general formula grant.

Two years ago, a flat grant amount for administrative expenditures was added to the general formula grant and this was found to be of assistance to smaller boards. However, any expenditures over the flat amount must be funded from the regular general formula grant.

The Report recommends that administrative services be funded by a separate global grant. There would be a dual rate based on student enrolment, with a specific rate for boards with less than 3200 students and a different rate for boards with over 3200 students. All boards would continue to receive a minimum guarantee such as the flat grant amount currently added to general formula funding.

The dual grant rates used in the Report were derived from the average district board management expenditures for boards within the two ranges. The changes that would occur in funding for 1989 with these new formulas are illustrated in the Report.

The Report does not recommend any changes to the present method of funding the other non-global or specific grants: ***driver education, adult education, summer school, boarding of pupils, capital equipment, repairs and renovations, and capital bus purchases.***

The other funding recommendation presented in the Report concerns ***funding for school construction.***

With the implementation of the Walker recommendations in 1981, the Province assumed responsibility for 100% funding of school construction. The Report notes that since that time there has been significant growth in the cost of debt service on school construction projects.

To limit the demand for new school facilities and to ensure only the highest priority projects go forward, the Report recommends a mandatory capital contribution should be made by district school boards. This contribution could come from either district school board surplus/reserve funds or from their municipal paying partners.

Two other features of the present funding process were re-affirmed in the Report.

In the past several years, district school boards have generated approximately $20 million annually through investment income, rentals, registration fees, or funding from the federal government for various programs/services.

In determining the funding requirements of district school boards, the FRC has always taken this source of revenue into account and the Report recommends the continuance of this practice.

Secondly, the FRC has always based its funding recommendations on a projection of district school boards' expenditures. The Report recommends this practice continue but suggests that district school boards submit to the

committee interim financial results and projections to confirm the accuracy of committee-based projections.

Accountability Relationships

The final section of the Report addresses the accountability relationships of the partners in education. The Report states that district school boards are responsible for the delivery of public education as determined by provincial legislation. They are also responsible for the prudent use of the funding provided by the provincial and municipal governments. By accepting these responsibilities, they become accountable to the Province and municipal units for effective delivery of public education and prudent resource management.

The Report concludes that existing examination practices such as district school board surveys, Department of Education audits and audits by the Auditor General do not sufficiently address the accountability relationships.

The first recommendation in this section calls for the establishment of a new accountability framework that would describe:

- the Minister's information requirements;
- the annual reporting requirements of each board;
- the process and timetable for reporting;
- how existing educational assessment practices will fit within the new framework.

The Report states that the accountability relationship would be well served if appropriate information on effective delivery of education and prudent resource management was reported by district school boards annually and subject to some form of substantiation or audit.

The Report recommends that initial information reported should focus on proper safeguarding of physical assets, economic and efficient management of public school programs, facilities and transportation, and whether public education is being effectively delivered.

The Report also recommends that the newly named Education and Funding Formula Review Committee be responsible for recommending the kinds of accountability information that should be gathered and reported and should suggest ways of improving use of resources and/or education delivery quality.

This process would still require an audit or verification component. The Report recommends that existing examination practices continue and be enhanced where necessary.

Overview of Responses

To the Recommendations of

The Formula Review Committee Study

Prepared by

Doane Raymond Management Consultants

The Regional Review Committee (RRC) was presented with 163 briefs during nine days of hearings and through written submissions received by mail. Briefs were contributed by the Nova Scotia School Boards Association and all district school boards, the Nova Scotia Teachers Union and its locals, many municipal units (either individually or through joint briefs), and a large number of parent-teacher associations, professional organizations, community groups, and individuals. Several presentations were made in French. A list of all briefs presented is provided as Appendix B.

The following overview concentrates on major points made repeatedly throughout the briefs presented by the RRC; however, copies of all written briefs have been made available for the Minister of Education and his Cabinet colleagues to aid in their decision making. The briefs will also form a valuable resource for committees and Department of Education staff members pursuing tasks resulting from this review.

GENERAL IMPRESSIONS

In this section, some general themes expressed in briefs presented to the RRC will be outlined. Views related directly to specific recommendations of the Report will be covered in the following sections.

The most persistent theme throughout the public hearings was the charge that the Report neglected educational in favor of financial values. While such a charge may not be fair to the authors of the Report in view of their terms of reference, the RRC was left in no doubt that a large number of Nova Scotians with an interest in education viewed at least some of the recommendations as severely detrimental to the educational well-being of young people.

A very strong negative reaction to the Report's statement that funding should not be program based was often expressed. Many critics of this statement felt the authors of the Report were proposing that program

considerations should be ignored in reaching funding decisions. Some briefs specifically called for program-based funding, although they generally gave few, if any, details of how such an arrangement would operate.

Contributing to a general atmosphere of concern was the uncertainty over exactly how the recommendations would affect individual school boards and municipal units. The Report provided detailed tables illustrating the effects of the recommendations under certain conditions. These examples were necessarily complex and the actual effects would obviously be subject to decisions that have yet to be made. Most important of these decisions is the definition of the core. Some presenters made it clear that their acceptance or rejection of certain of the Report's proposals would depend on how the core or "basic level of education service" was defined.

Unfortunately, there was some misunderstanding of the meaning of examples given in the Report. A particularly striking instance of this was the often repeated statement that Halifax City would lose approximately 250 teachers under the Report's recommendations. In fact, under the example provided in the Report, such a loss could only occur if the Halifax City Council made large reductions in the funding it has customarily provided to the school board.

The Report's proposal that the Formula Review Committee make its decisions within guidelines set by Management Board was the subject of much criticism. Although many of the critics agreed that some attention should be paid to the fiscal capacity of the province, fears were expressed that issuing guidelines would ensure that education program considerations would always play a secondary role in making decisions on funding.

Despite the Report's statement that the current overall cost-sharing ratio should not be significantly changed, the RRC was frequently told that the Report's recommendations would result in a major shift of financial

responsibility from the province to the municipal units. The charge was made, in fact, that the primary purpose of commissioning the Doane Raymond study was to find a way of effecting this transfer. The Union of Nova Scotia Municipalities' position that the Province should pay 100% of the cost of education was often quoted.

Another theme heard across the province was that all students throughout Nova Scotia should be provided with the same educational opportunities, without reducing the services now offered by the school systems with greater resources. Many of the harshest criticisms of the Report appeared to be based on a belief that its recommendations would promote further inequalities among school boards. The authors of the Report were accused of being overly concerned with provincial averages and failing to recognize the unique circumstances of individual boards. The "difficulty index", which was intended to accommodate these differences, was often dismissed as inadequate and/or incomprehensible.

The Parents Associations Within the Kings County District School Board presented a legal analysis which maintained that implementation of the Report's recommendations would increase inequalities in the level of educational services provided across the province and therefore would be unconstitutional under the Canadian Charter of Rights.

There was also a suggestion that equality of educational opportunity could be most effectively promoted by requiring all municipal contributions to be placed in a provincial pool, from which equalizing grants would be paid to school boards.

The Report was repeatedly criticized for being based on a small sampling of opinion. It was felt that there should have been an opportunity for a much wider range of groups and individuals to express their views to the consultants.

Some presenters made statements that the Report should be totally rejected. The RRC noted, however, that many of these presenters appeared, either in their written statements or in discussions, to accept at least a few of the ideas in the Report. For example, the proposal that a provincial standard of educational programs and services should be defined seemed to have very wide acceptance. Statements of "total rejection", therefore, should perhaps be interpreted as rejection of major elements of the Report – not necessarily rejection of every aspect of the proposals.

The RRC was frequently given the impression that presenters preferred the current funding arrangements to the Report's proposed system, although problems with the existing system were often mentioned. Cost-shared supplementary funding was heavily criticized, and some briefs indicated that the weighting factors which had been eliminated in favor of supplementary funding were preferable. Decisions by Government not to accept recommendations of the Formula Review Committee were also criticized. The RRC was repeatedly told that the Province should always fund the teacher salary increases it has negotiated.

Finally, although much of the comment received by the RRC was unfavorable to the Report, it was clear that the Doane Raymond study had served as a useful catalyst to a public discussion of education funding in the province. The RRC received many thoughtful suggestions for approaches to funding arrangements. These will play a valuable role in designing new funding formulas to meet the needs of Nova Scotians.

The following summary outlines views received by the RRC on specific topics.

FORMULA REVIEW COMMITTEE

Two Sub-Committee System

The Report recommended:

> *Recognizing the need for an education outcome advisory component to the annual education funding process, it is suggested that the FRC be divided into two sub-committees. One sub-committee, education, would provide advice to the Minister on education service delivery measures and would monitor education outcomes. The other sub-committee, finance, would provide advice on the level and distribution of funding to the district school boards.*

Little support was expressed for the Report's proposal to restructure the Formula Review Committee. Among the arguments made against this system were:

- Finance would dominate education considerations, since the finance sub-committee would be making its recommendations after the education sub-committee had completed its deliberations.
- It is important for the education and finance representatives to understand each other's viewpoints thoroughly and this is hindered by a two-committee structure. The Cumberland District School Board made the point in its brief that the Department of Education had criticized the board for maintaining a dual financial-educational administrative structure and had emphasized the need for a co-ordinated approach to program and funding decisions.
- An adversarial relationship could develop between education and finance representatives.

- The person chairing the two sub-committees would face an extremely difficult task in reconciling viewpoints reached in isolation by the two sub-committees.
- There is no evidence that the existing committee structure has been detrimental to responsible decision making by the Formula Review Committee.

The few briefs that actively supported a two-sub-committee structure appeared to do so on the basis that the Nova Scotia Teachers Union should not be directly involved in advising the provincial government on funding levels for education.

Several briefs suggested that, if the two-sub-committee system were adopted, the membership of one or both sub-committees should be enlarged; for example, by including the Nova Scotia School Boards Association on the education sub-committee.

Committee Reporting

The Report recommended:

> *The recommendations of the sub-committees would be reported to the Minister in an integrated report. The work of the education sub-committee would serve as input to that of the finance sub-committee. The final document would represent the recommendations of the combined sub-committees and would be prepared for the signature of the chair with endorsement by individual sub-committees for their respective contributions.*

The Report's recommendation was widely seen as guaranteeing the dominance of financial over educational considerations.

Committee Membership

The Report recommended:

> *Members of the education sub-committee would include a representative of the NSSBA, the NSTU, and the DOE.*
>
> *The finance sub-committee members would include a representative of the UNSM, the Department of Municipal Affairs, Management Board and the DOE.*
>
> *Both sub-committees would receive support from the Research Division of the DOE. The concept of resource personnel – alternates would be continued.*
>
> *An independent chair would sit on both sub-committees and would assume responsibility for reporting the efforts of both sub-committees to the Minister. The chair's term should be at the discretion of the Minister of Education. It would therefore be dependent on the quality and value of the recommendations brought forth by the Committee under the leadership of the chair.*

Some briefs suggested additions to the committee such as representatives of parents, superintendents, financial officers, or municipal representatives.

Voting

The Report recommended:

> *Each sub-committee member would have a vote on matters pertaining to their respective sub-committee business. Resource personnel – alternates would not*

> *vote except when they were acting in the capacity of a member.*

There was little comment on this recommendation.

Chair

The Report recommended:

> *We believe that the chair should be selected on the basis of having the appropriate skills and knowledge. The individual should have patience, political sensitivity, strength and leadership. He/she need not come from the education system, nor government. The chair should have keen analytic, communication and persuasive skills.*

Most briefs did not deal with this matter but some stated that the chair should have a good knowledge of both education programs and finance. There were several suggestions that the Deputy Minister of Education should chair the Formula Review Committee. One brief proposed that an independent chairperson should be appointed and not be subject to removal by the Minister of Education.

Periods of Activity

The Report recommended:

> *The education sub-committee would conduct its deliberations in the first half of the year and its recommendations would provide input to the finance sub-committee. The finance sub-committee would become active in the summer and would complete its work in the late fall of the year. The two sub-committees*

> *would meet together at least twice each year; at the conclusion of the education sub-committee's work and on completion of the report to the Minister.*

Little comment was made on this topic since the Report's suggestions were based on a Formula Review Committee divided into two sub-committees and that idea was rejected in most briefs.

Committee Member Terms

The Report recommended:

> *Terms of committee member appointment should be not less than two years. Individuals selected to represent the identified interest groups should be at the discretion of the appointing bodies. With the concept of resource person – alternate continued, the understanding would be that if an interest group chose to rotate its representatives then the participant would act as an alternate for at least one year to ensure continuity.*

Again, little comment was made on this subject. The brief from Barrington Municipality made the point that an introductory period for members should be provided; that is, they should sit as observers on the Formula Review Committee before the date of their actual appointment.

Committee Name

The Report recommended:

> *To reflect its wider mandate, the Formula Review Committee should be renamed "Education and Funding Formula Review Committee."*

The Report's suggestion for renaming the Formula Review Committee was generally accepted by those who commented on the matter.

THE FUNDING FORMULAS

Supplementary Funding

The Report recommended:

> *Cost shared supplementary funding is clearly a violation of the Walker notion that educational service levels in excess of a basic level should be for the account of the municipal paying partners. Moving in the direction of 100% municipal sharing on supplementary funding is desirable, on the assumption that the basic level of education services are 100% funded by the Province and the mandatory education tax.*
>
> *The cost shared aspect of supplementary funding should be phased out over a five year period with a one-fifth reduction in provincial sharing each year. This could be accompanied by a reduction in the education tax so that the Province neither gained nor lost in the transition.*
>
> *During our discussions with the school boards and the municipalities, it became clear that most were unsure of the nature of the expenditures which were being covered by supplementary grants. It is our view that the paying partners must be aware of the expenditures which they fund on a mandatory basis and on a cost shared basis.*

Reaction to this proposal varied. Some viewed it as a means of shifting financial burdens to municipalities. Some pointed out that it was

impossible to judge the acceptability of the proposal until the basic level of education service had been defined. Other briefs appeared to assume that the "basic level" would be inadequate and rejected the proposal on that basis.

Municipal units often noted that all municipalities had supported the Union of Nova Scotia Municipalities' resolution calling for public school education to be funded 100% by the Province. Some municipal representatives, however, did not appear ready to rule out completely the possibility of a municipality providing some extra funding for its schools if the local residents wished to support such a measure. Presenters who held the position that there should not be local supplementary funding generally based their arguments on the need to promote equality of educational opportunity across the province.

Some presenters felt that the authors of the Report had regarded current supplementary funding as being required only to cover the cost of "frills". A point made repeatedly throughout the hearings was that current supplementary funding, despite its name, is needed to support the normal operations of many school boards. It was also stated that supplementary funding would not be necessary if a satisfactory core were defined and supported.

Basic Level of Education Service

The Report recommended:

> *To facilitate board and municipal trade-off type decision making, the Province must articulate what constitutes a basic level of education service. The basic level of service should be stated in terms of resource deployment.*

Widespread support was expressed for the Report's proposal that a provincial definition of a "basic level of education service" or core* should be established. The Department of Education received detailed proposals related to this subject from the Richmond District School Board together with the Richmond NSTU Local, and from the Halifax County-Bedford District School Board. The core definition was widely recognized as the key to a satisfactory system of support for education and the department was advised to engage in full consultation with stakeholders in establishing a definition.

Despite the general support for the idea of a defined core, concern was repeatedly expressed that the basic level of education service might be defined at the "lowest common denominator" level. It was often stressed that support services as well as courses must be included in the core. In the words of the Annapolis District School Board, the core must "be realistic so as to meet the needs of students, parents, and the society of the twenty-first century."

Concern was also expressed that certain locally-initiated courses (e.g., forestry) that might be very important for the local community, would not be accommodated in the core. It was suggested that the core be defined to allow for some flexibility in this regard.

Halifax District School Board's presentation and several other briefs from the Halifax area expressed deep concern over the Report's lack of attention to several special programs which require funding support; in particular, programs for disadvantaged inner city children and for newly arrived immigrants who require education in English as a second language. The question was raised: would these important programs be part of the core?

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*Within this document, the term "core" refers to the basic level of education service, including both programs and support services.

A brief from the Teachers of English as a Second Language noted the special difficulties of the Halifax and Dartmouth District School Boards in supporting programs to teach English as a second language, since there is now no provincial or federal funding available.

General Formula Funding

The Report recommended:

> *The student unit driven general funding formula, which is based on a determination of the Provincial average cost, should be replaced by a Pupil-Teacher Ratio (PTR) based formula founded on a targeted level of education service effort. Expenditures related to education service levels in excess of the PTR targets would be considered supplementary.*

The Report's recommendation met with little support. A few presenters expressed conditional acceptance, provided the core was adequate. Many others were opposed. Among the points raised were:

- A board which has a general decline in enrolment cannot necessarily reduce staff simply because there are two or three fewer students in each class.
- The PTR target could too easily be changed by the Province to accommodate its budget objectives. One brief noted that the PTR target would become a negotiating point with the Nova Scotia Teachers Union.
- Even if attempts are made to use weighting factors to set appropriate PTRs for school boards in different circumstances, it will be extremely difficult to ensure that all special conditions are taken into account. In the words of the Cumberland District School Board, the proposed formula is not "sophisticated enough to meet the needs of twenty-one diverse school boards in Nova Scotia."

- Briefs from the three areas with school board-operated community colleges noted that vocational program costs had been ignored in the Report.

Property Service Target

The Report recommended:

> *In a similar manner to the PTR target concept for school administration and instruction, we propose a targeted level of property service expenditures based on an established rate per square foot and a target level of pupil driven gross square footage.*

The proposal for funding property service was frequently criticized as inappropriate. Among the reasons given were:

- Declines in enrolment do not produce proportional declines in the need for property services.
- Isolated schools must often operate well below design capacity.
- Older, well used schools may be more expensive to service and the formula provides no recognition of this factor. Older school buildings may also represent important community traditions that should not be discarded lightly.
- The proposed formula would, in the words of the Halifax District School Board, "set in motion economic pressures to put as many children as possible into the least amount of space."
- Under the Report's recommendation, a significant number of new schools would be underfunded for property service if a provincial average square footage per student were used.

Presenters who dealt with property service often mentioned the deteriorating condition of many school buildings and the need to encourage

preventive maintenance. Some briefs suggested recognition in the formula of varying needs for property service for different types of buildings.

Transportation Service Targets

The Report recommended:

> *For transportation service we propose a formula similar to the one recommended for property service. In this case, however, we suggest establishing a rate per loaded pupil mile based on the average cost of operation of the provincial bus fleet.*

Little support was expressed for this proposal. Northside-Victoria District School Board noted that the absence of current loaded mile data made it difficult to judge the effects loaded mile funding would have on an area. One objection to a loaded mile system was based on the position that the fixed costs of operating buses (salaries especially) are a relatively large part of the total cost and therefore a loaded mile formula would be detrimental to boards with compact geography. Several school boards questioned why any change was necessary, but at least one board (Annapolis) appeared to agree with the implication in the Report that the current system rewarded inefficiency.

Among the suggestions for alternative funding arrangements were:

- Re-introduce weighting factors which assisted boards with sparse populations spread over large areas.
- Use a two-component formula, with a fixed amount per bus plus a rate per loaded mile.
- Fund on the basis of average cost per eligible pupil transported, adjusted by a population density factor.
- Retain the current system (100% provincial funding, with a limit on the annual expansion allowed), and, if it is felt that some boards are

not operating efficiently, have more monitoring by the Department of Education.

Considerable attention was given in briefs to the special circumstances that make it necessary to transport students for even short distances. In particular, the hazard of having young children walking along busy roads without sidewalks was mentioned often. The current regulation that guarantees transportation only to those who live at least 3.6 km from their school was often noted and criticized as unrealistic.

Administrative Services

The Report recommended:

> *We support the concept of being sensitive to the needs of the smallest boards. Therefore we propose a dual administrative service rate; the first, for small boards, being an enrolment driven grant based on the average cost of operation of the small boards (less than 3,200 pupils); the second, for all other boards, also being an enrolment driven grant based on the average cost of operation of boards with enrolments over 3,200.*
>
> *To the extent that a board is unable to operate at or below the average of the boards in the group, these amounts will be considered supplementary. We advocate the maintenance of a minimum administration services grant ($420,000 in 1990) for all school boards. This grant should be price indexed using say the Nova Scotia CPI.*

Detailed comments on this subject were infrequent, which presumably indicated fairly widespread agreement with the Report's recommendation. A few briefs rejected the proposal and/or suggested alternatives:

- Use three levels, rather than two. The Municipality of the District of Shelburne suggested 0-3000, 3001-4500 and 4500 + students as appropriate divisions.
- Annapolis District School Board suggested funding on the basis of a target level of service, rather than by enrolment.

Other Formula Components

The Report recommended:

> *Except for school capital discussed below, we do not recommend changes to the funding formula for the "family of four" (special education to form part of the PTR based general formula), capital equipment and repairs/renovations, or bus purchases.*

Special Education

Special education was one of the most frequently discussed topics during the public hearings. The Report's proposal to remove special education funding from the "family of five" (non-global) category and place it with the global general formula funding was seen by boards, teachers, municipal units, parents, and community groups as a serious threat to the maintenance of special education programs. The points made included the following:

- Merging special education into the general calculation of the pupil-teacher ratio for funding purposes ignores the special resources and low PTRs required by these programs. The proposal also fails to take into account the uneven distribution of special education students among boards.
- The level of special education services already varies widely across the province and the Report's recommendation would increase the disparities.

- If special education funding becomes global, a minority of children with special needs will be competing for resources with the majority.
- Special education expenditures have grown rapidly since the early 1980s, as the Report says, but this reflected the need to establish and build programs that never before existed. Children who once would have been kept at home or in institutions are now being educated in public schools.
- Higher expectations of society and legal requirements under the Charter of Rights oblige school boards to provide special education services. Education for all children is a right, not a privilege.
- Trying to restrict expenditures on special education is false economy, since these programs allow many children to participate and contribute to society who might otherwise spend their lives in institutions which are very expensive to operate.
- Some mention was made of the extra costs of serving children with particularly severe handicaps, but the Department of Education was also cautioned to avoid a funding system that involved the labelling of children.

An interesting point made in a few presentations was that health or community services funds that had once been used for children with special education needs when these children were institutionalized were not transferred to education when the children were enrolled in public schools.

Although presenters frequently recognized that important progress had been made in special education during the past decade, it was pointed out that much remains to be done. The benefits of integrating children with special needs in regular classrooms have become widely acknowledged, but the support services needed to make integration a success must be funded adequately.

Acadian Districts

Several major themes emerged from presentations which discussed Acadian districts:

- **Deep concern over the threat of assimilation was expressed. A high quality Acadian school program was seen as a major means of countering that threat.**
- **Acadian schools and districts do incur extra costs. The presentation from Conseil Scolaire Clare Argyle provided a clear overview of the needs that lead to these costs: supplementary personnel to accommodate dual language tracks, as well as the extra language credits Acadian students must take; translation services to accommodate both English and French communities; teaching materials that are generally printed in fairly small quantities and therefore are expensive; teacher training and inservice work that tends to be more expensive because the resource people may not be available locally; and cultural components (e.g. theatrical presentations) that are essential to an adequate Acadian school program.**
- **Several briefs stated that Acadian students should have access to as wide a range of program choices in French as Anglophone students have in English.**
- **Especially in Clare-Argyle, strong criticism was expressed of the current means of distributing the funds intended to supply special assistance to Acadian districts. The existing "Acadian factor" provides a 5% supplement to the general funding formula grant and therefore the supplement is determined by the total enrolment of the district, rather than the extent of its Acadian programs. There were calls to relate the funding more directly to actual costs, possibly by using a factor driven by enrolment in Acadian programs.**
- **Some briefs stated that Acadian funding should be audited to ensure it is used only for Acadian programs.**

- The Report proposed that the Acadian factor be rationalized to reflect more accurately the actual service delivery costs. The Report also suggested periodic review of the Acadian factor by those with direct knowledge of the needs of Acadian districts. The latter proposal was widely supported.

Library Services

Although the Report did not deal directly with the funding of library services, which is currently provided through the general formula grant, briefs from school librarians indicated repeatedly that a review of this funding is needed. The following concerns were noted:

- Great inequalities exist in school library materials and services across the province.
- The Department of Education expounds the value of school library services in its curriculum documents but fails to provide a funding arrangement that will ensure these services are adequate or even exist.
- School libraries' access to resources tends to follow an erratic course. When financial pressures on school boards are not too severe, library services may be significantly upgraded, only to have some or all of the gains lost when general restraints are imposed.
- The need for library materials is not proportional to the size of the school. For example, basic reference materials are required, whatever the enrolment. Rural students, with little access to other library resources may, in fact, need a better school library than their urban counterparts.
- School libraries must be staffed with qualified people.
- With a school program that emphasizes the need for students to learn how to find and use information, adequate library services are becoming even more important to a high quality education system.

In summary, the RRC was told that funding for school library services should be adequate and should be protected to remove the danger it will be diverted for other educational purposes during times of restraint.

Adult Education

The briefs the Regional Review Committee received from adult education administrators and groups with a special interest in this area of education were generally consistent in their approach.

The importance of continuing education and community schools to the many Nova Scotians served by these programs was described and the current system of providing a protected (non-global) adult education grant related to the number of adults living in the area served by the school board was supported. (The Report had not recommended a change.) The Department of Education was asked to preserve adult education as a distinct component within the department and give high priority to the professional development of adult education administrators and instructors.

Board Revenues

The Report recommended:

> *We recommend continuance of the practice of including board revenues as a source of funding. There are some forms of unique fund raising activities, such as special projects funded by the Federal government in Richmond District School Board, which boards can initiate. These funds should not be treated in the same manner as other board revenues, rather they should remain directly with the board. Direct costs associated with these special projects should be accounted for separately and excluded from the funding formula calculations.*

Few detailed comments were made on this recommendation. Digby District School Board expressed agreement. Conseil Scolaire Clare-Argyle disagreed with the inclusion of board revenues in making projections because their revenues from board-initiated activities were not guaranteed from year to year. Shelburne County and Richmond District School Boards had a similar position.

Capital Funding

The Report recommended:

> *To limit the demand for new school facilities and to ensure only the highest priority school projects go forward, we propose the introduction of a mandatory local capital contribution. The amount required should be based on the proportion of board operating costs funded by municipalities.*

The proposal for introducing a requirement for a local share in major school construction projects was overwhelmingly rejected. Among the arguments presented were:

- The Report's recommendation would do nothing to promote its objective of ensuring "only the highest priority school projects go forward." Projects in relatively affluent areas might go forward; others would not. The net effect would be promotion of inequalities across the province.
- Since school boards would generally have to obtain the "local share" from the supporting municipal units, and since the building could only be located in one of those units, obtaining agreement to provide the local share would be difficult or impossible.
- The Province promoted the formation of district boards partly through the promise of 100% provincial support for major capital projects. A retreat from that position would be a breach of faith.

- If capital construction expenditures are out of control, it is a provincial responsibility since all projects must be approved by the Province. The school boards and municipal units should not be penalized for the Province's inability to control its expenditures.
- A brief from Mr. George Walker maintained that there already is a municipal contribution to capital construction costs, since they share in the total cost of education and debt service is part of that total.

Several briefs suggested that an independent committee be established to set construction priorities.

ACCOUNTABILITY RELATIONSHIPS

The Report recommended:

> *The Minister of Education should establish a new accountability framework that describes:*
> *i) the Minister's information requirements;*
> *ii) the annual reporting requirements of each Board;*
> *iii) the process and timetable for reporting; and,*
> *iv) how existing assessment practices will fit within the new framework.*
>
> *This new framework should be guided by three fundamentals. They are:*
> *i) the Minister needs information relevant to his responsibilities under the Education Act and as a member of the provincial Cabinet;*
> *ii) school boards need to know that information being requested will contribute to their own goals of good management; and,*
> *iii) all information required for accountability purposes must be capable of substantiation. Accountability*

cannot be satisfied by the general opinions or intuition of others.

The Education and Funding Formula Review Committee's mandate should be expanded to make it responsible for:

i) recommending initial accountability information requirements to the Minister;

ii) recommending modifications or amendments to the Minister's accountability information requirements; and,

iii) reviewing accountability reports and recommending, where warranted, ways of improving resource utilization and/or education delivery quality.

Accountability information, in this context, must be related to prudent resource management or quality of education programs and must be capable of substantiation.

We recommend that initial information requirements focus on providing reasonable assurance that:

i) physical assets are properly safeguarded;

ii) public school programs, building maintenance and pupil transportation are carried out economically and efficiently; and that,

iii) public education is being delivered effectively.

Annual information reports should provide assertions from Board management that the information provided is, to the best of their knowledge, accurate and reliable.

Board management must take responsibility for the accuracy and reliability of information provided to the Minister. For the information to have value, the Minister must be able to rely upon it.

Existing examination practices should be continued. In the future their focus should be directed toward the accuracy and reliability of information contained in board reports.

Departmental examination practices, and the work of the Auditor General, provide needed assurance that the education system is sound. They form an essential part of the validation process and should continue.

Implementation of the new accountability framework should commence on a pilot basis in 1990 with full implementation to occur in 1992.

It will take time to develop appropriate accountability information. Two or three boards should participate in the development of the Minister's information requirements. These same boards should help develop and test reporting mechanisms. We expect it to take about two years to develop initial information requirements. These should be introduced to boards for the 1992 fiscal year. The Education and Funding Formula Review Committee's Education sub-committee should participate in the development of the accountability framework.

Many briefs either did not mention this section of the Report or simply expressed approval of the general idea of increased accountability. There were, however, some strong expressions of concern:

- The question of the accountability of school boards to bodies other than the Department of Education was raised. Some suggested that boards should be more accountable to municipal units and the general public. A call was made in some briefs for improving public accountability by establishing fully elected school boards.
- The suggestion in the Report that provincial testing program results might be used as a measure of the effectiveness of program delivery was severely criticized. In the words of a brief from supervisory staff of the Kings County District School Board, "The report trivializes the delivery of a top quality educational program by attempting to reduce it to a numeric quantity that can be extracted from some set of data." This and other briefs spoke of the unquantifiable outcomes of a good education system (e.g., attitudes and values).
- Some briefs observed that many reporting mechanisms were already in place and wondered what further measures were needed.
- The Department of Education was urged to engage in full consultation with those concerned if new accountability measures are to be developed. Several school boards offered to assist in this process.

The Nova Scotia Federation of Home and School Associations supported the Report's recommendations on accountability. They urged that all boards and schools publish annual reports, handbooks for parents on policies and procedures be provided by all boards, and the Department of Education's annual report be expanded to include detail of educational attainment in Nova Scotia and progress with respect to national and international standards. The Federation also urged the establishment of fully elected school boards to improve accountability.

Recommendations

of the

Regional Review Committee

The Regional Review Committee gave full consideration to the recommendations of the Report, the views received from interested groups and individuals throughout Nova Scotia, and input from staff members of the Department of Education. As a result of this consultative process, the committee wishes to make the following recommendations to the Minister of Education.

FORMULA REVIEW COMMITTEE

COMMITTEE STRUCTURE

The Report's position that the Formula Review Committee concept is fundamentally sound was not challenged in the public hearings and is supported by the Regional Review Committee (RRC). The hearings, however, revealed strong and widespread opposition to the Report's recommendation that the Formula Review Committee be divided into education and finance sub-committees headed by a single chairperson. The RRC agreed with the general view that the division could hinder communication between the two sectors, fail to ensure that the educational consequences of financial decisions were taken fully into account, and give the person who chaired both sub-committees an extremely difficult task in attempting to present a unified view to the Minister of Education.

The Report said that the proposed sub-committee structure would allow the members to "concentrate and exploit their respective areas of expertise." The RRC concluded that any advantages gained by greater concentration on areas of expertise would be more than offset by the disadvantage of communication difficulties between the two sub-committees.

Recommendation 1 *The Formula Review Committee should continue to function as one committee to ensure that all members are fully aware of the details of both program and funding issues.*

COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

The RRC considered the suggestions that had been made in some briefs for additions to the membership of the Formula Review Committee. The current membership, however, already represents a wide range of interests, either directly or indirectly, and the RRC felt that increasing the size of the Committee would not be desirable.

Recommendation 2 *The membership of the Formula Review Committee should remain unchanged; that is, in addition to the chairperson there should be one representative each from the Nova Scotia School Boards Association, the Nova Scotia Teachers Union, the Union of Nova Scotia Municipalities, Management Board, and the Department of Municipal Affairs; and two representatives from the Department of Education.*

COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSON

The RRC agreed with comments made in several briefs that the chairperson of the Formula Review Committee should have knowledge of both educational programs and educational finance.

Recommendation 3 *The Formula Review Committee Chairperson should be appointed by the Minister of Education as soon as possible. The chairperson should have knowledge of both the program and financial aspects of education.*

PERIODS OF ACTIVITY

In past years, Formula Review Committee meetings have often been scheduled only during the second half of the year. With an expanded

mandate, the committee will need to meet more frequently and, in the view of the RRC, should be reconvened as soon as possible.

Recommendation 4 *The Formula Review Committee should meet throughout the year in order to fulfil its expanded mandate as noted under Recommendation 26, and to provide more time for both monitoring the effects of current funding arrangements and planning for the following year. The Formula Review Committee should be reconvened at the earliest possible date.*

COMMITTEE MEMBER TERMS

Although few briefs mentioned the Report's recommendations on the length of the terms of Formula Review Committee members, the RRC felt the authors of the Report were correct in attempting to ensure a degree of continuity in the membership. The matters dealt with by the Formula Review Committee are complex and committee members need considerable time to familiarize themselves thoroughly with the issues.

Recommendation 5 *The bodies appointing members to the Formula Review Committee should be asked to make the appointments for a minimum of two years. Continuity should be promoted either through rotation of voting members and alternates as recommended in the Doane Raymond Report or through invitations to new members to sit as observers for several meetings prior to the date of their actual appointment as voting members.*

ROLE OF BUDGETARY GUIDELINES

The RRC agreed with the view expressed in most briefs that education program considerations must not be ignored in favor of financial restraint. The RRC, however, could not accept the proposition that the Formula Review Committee should operate without consideration of fiscal reality. In view of the importance to school boards of long term planning, the RRC agreed with those presenters who said that an attempt should be made to indicate the general level of financial support the Government plans to allocate to education for several years in advance.

Recommendation 6 *Government should provide initial budgetary guidelines for the Formula Review Committee, on the understanding that these guidelines will be subject to review if requested by the Committee after it has thoroughly investigated the funding required to maintain satisfactory levels of educational service. The Government should also give serious consideration to providing an indication of planned resource allocations for school boards three years in advance.*

COMMITTEE NAME

The Report's proposal for a change in the name of the Formula Review Committee was considered appropriate both in the briefs that dealt with the matter and by the RRC.

Recommendation 7 *The Formula Review Committee should be renamed the "Education and Funding Formula Review Committee."*

THE FUNDING FORMULAS

BASIC LEVEL OF EDUCATION SERVICE

The Report recommended that a basic level of education service be defined for the province and be supported by provincial and mandatory local contributions. The Report also noted that the Pottier and Walker Commissions had made similar proposals. There was widespread support for establishment of a provincial basic level of educational service or "core". Presenters also made the point that the core should not be based on the lowest common denominator. It should include not only courses, but also the various support services required in a modern school system; for example, guidance and library services. Establishment of a satisfactory core was often viewed as a key to promoting equality of educational opportunity across the province.

The RRC agreed with these points and also accepted the frequently expressed view that input from interested groups and individuals should be obtained in establishing a definition of the core.

Departmental staff have already explored some of the aspects of defining the core, but it is clear that the definition cannot be satisfactorily completed and related to funding decisions in the time available before the beginning of the new school board fiscal year on January 1, 1991. However, the RRC felt that the relationship between the core and funding formulas must be established. Work should therefore proceed on the definition of a level of educational service that must be made available throughout the province.

Recommendation 8 *In order that there can be a relationship between the core and funding, the Department of Education staff should continue research on a definition of the core and present a discussion paper to the Minister's Advisory Committee on the Public School Program not later than January 1,*

1991. The Advisory Committee should then be asked to obtain input from a wide range of publics and present recommendations to the Minister on an appropriate core of educational programs and services for Nova Scotia. The Advisory Committee should be asked to work toward a goal of completing its work in time for implementation of approved recommendations in the 1992-93 fiscal year.

SUPPLEMENTARY FUNDING

The Report proposed that the current, cost-shared system of supplementary funding be eliminated. The RRC was frequently told by presenters about the problems this system creates. In particular, serious tensions arise between school boards and municipal councils because boards cannot obtain the provincial share unless the councils agree to provide the local share of the supplementary funding. Some briefs indicated a preference for the system of weighting factors which had preceded the introduction of supplementary funding.

The Report had indicated that the role of current supplementary funding was not defined clearly and this was supported in many briefs. It was often pointed out that the supplementary funding is required by many boards to conduct their normal operations and is not a means of supporting "frills".

Despite the evident dissatisfaction with the cost-shared supplementary funding system, the RRC was often told that the funds the system provides are necessary and must continue to be provided. The RRC favored the elimination of cost-shared supplementary funding but recognized that this must be done with careful attention both to the needs of school boards and the limits on provincial resources. A transition period may be necessary.

Recommendation 9 *Beginning with the 1991-92 school board fiscal year, cost-shared supplementary funding should be eliminated to the extent possible within the resources available to the Province. In the transition period until the programs and services within the core are defined, weighting factors and guaranteed minimum grants may be necessary to offset the effect on school boards of moving away from cost-shared supplementary funding.*

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE CORE AND SUPPLEMENTARY FUNDING

The Report proposed that any programs or services beyond the core be supported 100% by supplementary funding from the municipal units. The RRC concluded that this proposal was sound in principle and would be widely accepted if the core were satisfactorily defined and supported by mandatory provincial and municipal contributions. Under these circumstances many boards would have less need for supplementary funding.

Recommendation 10 *When a satisfactory core has been defined and a method for funding it through mandatory provincial and municipal contributions has been established, programs or services in excess of the core should be funded fully by local contributions.*

GENERAL FORMULA FUNDING

The RRC heard a wide variety of views on the Report's recommendation for general formula funding based on pupil-teacher ratio targets. Although a few briefs expressed conditional acceptance of the proposal, most others voiced opposition, usually based on the belief that PTR-based funding would discriminate against boards with declining enrolment and would be subject

to arbitrary changes to accommodate financial restraint. The RRC concluded that the introduction of PTR-based funding was unnecessary. The committee felt the use of enrolment-driven grants should continue, with full consideration of program requirements.

Recommendation 11 *Pupil-teacher ratio targets should not be used as the means of determining provincial grants to school boards. The current enrolment-driven grant structure should be retained.*

PROPERTY SERVICE

The RRC was presented with several convincing reasons for rejecting the Report's recommendation on the method of calculating property service grants. The proposal involved calculation of a provincial average gross square footage (GSF) per student. The provincial grant would be based on a rate per target gross square foot. Expenditures beyond the target would be a local responsibility.

This proposal does not take into account the great variances among schools and districts. The GSF required in elementary schools, for example, is not the same as in high schools. Older schools have different space allocations than new buildings. The mix of different types of schools varies from board to board. In brief, the RRC did not believe it would be feasible to determine an average GSF per student that would produce equitable results.

The issue of using an enrolment-driven factor in determining the property service grant was frequently raised during the hearings, and the RRC agreed that a valid case could be made for reducing the role of this factor. The RRC, however, did not agree that the enrolment factor should be eliminated entirely, since enrolment does have some effect on the amount of property service required. Deleting the factor would also remove an incentive for school boards to use their buildings as efficiently as possible.

The committee also felt that a review should be conducted when enrolment in a school falls far below the school's capacity. If the board can demonstrate that the under-utilization of the school space is necessary (for example, because of the isolation of the school), the property service grant should be maintained; otherwise, a reduction should be made.

Another issue raised at the hearings concerned the need for recognition of the higher costs incurred in keeping older buildings in good repair. The RRC agreed that an attempt should be made to recognize this factor in the funding formulas.

The RRC, both from its own knowledge and from information presented during the hearings, believes there is cause for concern regarding the general condition of many school buildings in Nova Scotia. Work required to service and maintain facilities adequately may be postponed in favor of using funds for more immediate needs. The long term consequences of such decisions can be very serious. The RRC felt that action was needed to ensure that all school buildings provide a clean, safe environment for students and that property service funds are not diverted for other purposes. Appropriate preventive maintenance programs are also essential to safeguard the very large investment of public funds represented by school facilities.

Recommendation 12

(a) The property service grant should become a non-global grant commencing January 1, 1991, with the use of funds restricted to property service purposes.

(b) If a school board does not use its entire property service grant within a fiscal year, the board should be required to place the remaining amount in a special fund reserved for the board's future property service needs.

(c) The property service grant should continue to be calculated using components that

recognize both gross square footage and enrolment. The trend, already begun, of reducing the relative importance of the enrolment-driven aspect of the property service grant should continue, with an eventual target of having the formula governed 70% by the gross square footage and 30% by enrolment. In determining the gross square footage for a school board, administration offices and teacher resource centres, as well as schools, should be recognized.

(d) When the enrolment of a school falls below 50% of its design capacity, the Department of Education should review the school's situation with the board and determine whether special circumstances justify the under-utilization of space. If such special circumstances cannot be demonstrated, the property service grant received by the board in respect of this school should be reduced by 50%.

Recommendation 13

(a) In recognition of the higher maintenance needs of older schools, a capital, non-global, preventive maintenance grant should be provided to each school board.

(b) The preventive maintenance grant should be based on the gross square footage of all schools that are more than ten years old. The age of schools for purposes of the grant should be determined as of September 30 of each year. Schools which have received

major renovations should be dated from the completion of those renovations.

Recommendation 14 *The Department of Education should establish detailed guidelines for the use of preventive maintenance grants commencing in the 1991-92 fiscal year.*

TRANSPORTATION

The RRC agreed with the point made in many briefs that the Report's recommendation for transportation grants based on loaded pupil miles might penalize school districts of compact size. The loaded mile approach also requires extensive monitoring that could not be performed by existing staff in the Department of Education. The use of resources for this purpose may not be justified by the potential increases in cost effectiveness. The committee, however, was concerned that the current system of 100% provincial funding of operating expenses offered little incentive to boards to operate efficiently.

The RRC was also concerned about the variations in service levels across the province. Among these variable factors are pickup times, school arrival and departure times, and policies on courtesy pickups. Many boards operate their own transportation systems, but some engage private contractors, and there are also some arrangements with public transit systems. The RRC felt a comprehensive review of student transportation services was needed.

Recommendation 15 *The current method of determining the student transportation grant should be continued for the 15-month 1991-92 school board fiscal year.*

Recommendation 16 *The Department of Education should establish a committee to review student transportation*

services across the province and, not later than September 30, 1991, develop a provincial standard level of service. This level of service should then be funded fully by provincial grants commencing in the 1992-93 fiscal year. The committee should include representatives of school board staff, Department of Education staff, and other persons with expertise in this area.

ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES

The response to the Report's proposal for a two-tier administrative services grant, designed to be sensitive to the needs of the smallest boards, was generally favorable, although questions were raised regarding the determination of the dividing line between the two tiers. The RRC accepted the principle of the proposal but did not find that the Report had given convincing reasons for using two different enrolment-driven rates related to a division of school boards into "small" and "large" categories based on a rather arbitrary dividing line. The RRC felt that using one enrolment-driven rate along with guaranteed minimum grants would be more satisfactory. A definition of standard levels of administrative services should be part of the provincial core.

Recommendation 17 *For the 1991-92 school board fiscal year, the administrative services grant should be based on enrolments, subject to a minimum grant guarantee to assist the smaller school boards. A standard level of administrative services should be defined as part of the core.*

OTHER FORMULA COMPONENTS

Special Education

Many briefs noted the important progress that had been made in special education programs since non-global funding for these programs was introduced following the Walker Report. The RRC agreed with the view expressed unanimously throughout the hearings that combining special education funding with the general formula global funding would seriously endanger special education programs because of competing demands from other programs for the global funds.

Recommendation 18 *Separate special education funding should be maintained.*

The RRC was given considerable information on issues in special education and concluded that a comprehensive review of special education funding is needed in view of its complex nature and the rapid development in this field over recent years. Problems include the relatively low level of services at the secondary level, and the possibility that current funding practices do not recognize factors such as the extra cost of serving students with severe handicaps, the uneven distribution of such students across districts, and the special difficulties of serving low incidence, severely handicapped students in boards with a small and/or scattered population base. Auditing and reporting mechanisms in special education are especially difficult to establish because of differing approaches among boards and current trends such as extensive collaboration between regular classroom teachers and special education teachers. Another aspect of special education that requires review is the co-ordination of services to students provided by education, health and community services.

Recommendation 19 *The Department of Education should establish a committee to undertake a comprehensive review*

of special education funding within a two-year time frame. The review would:

(a) determine a basic level of special education required by school boards at both elementary and secondary levels, and determine the associated costs;

(b) determine the extraordinary services required for students with severe handicaps, the associated costs, and the feasibility and desirability of providing a separate funding component for these services;

(c) recommend reporting and auditing procedures consistent with current special education practices;

(d) recommend optimal funding procedures to cover both basic and higher cost special education in the most equitable fashion across the province;

(e) recommend appropriate means of co-ordinating the services provided to special education students by education, health and community services.

The committee should include representatives of school board special education administrators, the NSTU, the NSSBA, and the Department of Education.

Acadian Districts

Currently, Acadian district school boards receive a five percent supplement in their general formula grant to help offset the extra costs they incur. Since the five percent factor is applied to the general formula, it is directly related to the total enrolment of the board and has no relation to the extent of the board's Acadian programs.

The RRC agreed with the position expressed in several briefs that the current system of distributing special funding for various Acadian programs is unsatisfactory and that the number of students enrolled in Acadian programs should be a factor in determining grants. Some briefs also called for audit reports on how the school board had used Acadian funds, and the RRC agreed that school boards should be required to document the utilization of these funds.

The briefs also provided some clear statements of the reasons for extra funds being required. However, it appeared evident to the RRC that a detailed review of the special costs incurred by Acadian districts is required and that it should be done in consultation with representatives of the Acadian community.

Recommendation 20 *For the 1991-92 school board fiscal year, the Acadian weighting factor should remain unchanged, but each school board receiving funding through the factor should be asked to provide a detailed report of how the funding is to be used during the year.*

Recommendation 21 *The Minister's Advisory Committee on Acadian Schools should be asked to prepare, not later than September 30, 1991, recommendations for provincial guidelines on acceptable uses for funds intended to support the extra costs incurred by Acadian districts.*

Recommendation 22 *Acadian funding should be provided through a non-global grant commencing in the 1992-93 fiscal year. Any amount of the grant not spent in accordance with provincial guidelines should be recoverable by the Province.*

Library Funding

The RRC noted that expenditures by boards on library materials show a very large variance in the amount expended per student. Differences in the level of staffing by professional school librarians are also striking. All briefs from school librarians emphasized the need for protected library funding. The RRC was persuaded by the evidence presented that some such protection is necessary if school libraries are to play the important role they should in supporting a curriculum that emphasizes research and learning how to learn.

Recommendation 23 *Funds to support school library materials should be provided through a special purpose (non-global) grant commencing January 1, 1991. The grant should be based on an amount per student, with a minimum amount per school board that would be related to the number of schools operated by the board. The staffing of school libraries should be considered within the definition of the core.*

BOARD REVENUES

The RRC found the Report's recommendation on the matter of board-generated revenues to be widely accepted.

Recommendation 24 *Board-generated revenues should continue to be included as a source of funding, except when the revenues arise from special projects such as a short term education project negotiated with a federal government department. Direct costs associated with these special projects should be accounted for separately and excluded from funding formula calculations.*

CAPITAL FUNDING

The almost unanimous rejection of the Report's recommendation that school boards and/or municipal units share in the cost of school capital construction projects was based on several points which the RRC found convincing:

- Requiring a local contribution to capital construction would tend to promote inequalities in educational services, since the areas with more resources would be more willing and able to fund new construction.
- All except three of the province's school boards are supported by more than one municipal unit. Convincing municipal units to contribute to the cost of constructing a school not located within their boundaries would be difficult.
- The agreements forming the district school boards were reached on the understanding that the province would cover 100% of the cost of major capital school construction.

Recommendation 25 *The Province should continue to provide 100% of the funding for approved, major capital construction projects. Every school board should be required to set priorities for the projects it submits for approval. Department of Education staff should continue to recommend priorities for the projects submitted for Cabinet's consideration.*

ACCOUNTABILITY RELATIONSHIPS

Accountability relationships attracted less detailed attention during the hearings than most other sections of the Report. The need for accountability, as one might expect, was widely acknowledged, but some briefs expressed doubt that the Department of Education needed more information than it already receives. It was also suggested that the

department should allocate more resources to make better use of the information already collected. Other briefs warned against using trends in provincial testing program as the only measure of the effectiveness of education program delivery by a board.

The RRC concluded that the Report's recommendations on accountability relationships should be accepted in principle. In view of the alarm expressed in some briefs over the possibility of misuse of provincial testing program results, the RRC wished to emphasize that it supports the Department of Education's longstanding position that these results are just one measure of program effectiveness and must not be used in isolation from other considerations.

Several briefs expressed the view that accountability measures should be developed in consultation with the parties who will be affected by these measures. The RRC agreed and felt that the Education and Funding Formula Review Committee should be able to consult with representatives from a wide range of interests.

Recommendation 26

As recommended in the Doane Raymond Report, a new accountability framework should be established that describes

i) the Minister's information requirements;

ii) the annual reporting requirements of each board;

iii) the process and timetable for reporting; and,

iv) how existing assessment practices will fit within the new framework.

The newly named Education and Funding Formula Review Committee should be assigned overall responsibility for:

i) recommending initial accountability information requirements to the Minister;

ii) *recommending modifications or amendments to the Minister's accountability information requirements; and,*

iii) *reviewing accountability reports and recommending, where warranted, ways of improving resource utilization and/or education delivery quality.*

Recommendation 27

The Education and Funding Formula Review Committee should develop proposals for appropriate financial and educational measures to promote accountability. In developing these measures, the Committee may find it desirable to consult with representatives of the Department of Education, parents, school boards, municipal units, teachers, education administrators, and school board chief financial officers.

IN CONCLUSION

The Regional Review Committee (RRC) believes that in the preceding recommendations it has proposed a satisfactory means of funding public education for the 1991-92 fiscal year and has outlined a course of action for developing an improved funding system for the future.

The Doane Raymond Report and the large number of detailed responses to that report given to the RRC have provided valuable information needed to refine the funding system. Much work remains to be done, however, and the RRC has proposed that a number of committees be established to carry out the necessary research and consultation. The latter element is important. Throughout the hearings, it was evident that Nova Scotians expect to be consulted on major decisions in public education and are willing to contribute time and effort to the consultative process.

The RRC wishes to emphasize that it views the definition of the core – the level of programs and services that will be supported throughout the province by mandatory provincial and municipal grants – as the key component in an improved funding system. With the implementation of a funding arrangement based on a carefully defined core, Nova Scotia will have taken a major step in ensuring equality of educational opportunity across the province.

Appendices

APPENDIX A

SUMMARY OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE REGIONAL REVIEW COMMITTEE

Recommendation 1 *The Formula Review Committee should continue to function as one committee to ensure that all members are fully aware of the details of both program and funding issues.*

Recommendation 2 *The membership of the Formula Review Committee should remain unchanged; that is, in addition to the chairperson there should be one representative each from the Nova Scotia School Boards Association, the Nova Scotia Teachers Union, the Union of Nova Scotia Municipalities, Management Board, and the Department of Municipal Affairs; and two representatives from the Department of Education.*

Recommendation 3 *The Formula Review Committee Chairperson should be appointed by the Minister of Education as soon as possible. The chairperson should have knowledge of both the program and financial aspects of education.*

Recommendation 4 *The Formula Review Committee should meet throughout the year in order to fulfil its expanded mandate as noted under Recommendation 26, and to provide more time for both monitoring the effects of current funding arrangements and planning for the following year. The Formula Review Committee should be reconvened at the earliest possible date.*

Recommendation 5 *The bodies appointing members to the Formula Review Committee should be asked to make the appointments for a minimum of two years. Continuity should be promoted either through rotation of voting members and alternates as recommended in the Doane Raymond Report or through invitations to new members to sit as observers*

for several meetings prior to the date of their actual appointment as voting members.

Recommendation 6 *Government should provide initial budgetary guidelines for the Formula Review Committee, on the understanding that these guidelines will be subject to review if requested by the Committee after it has thoroughly investigated the funding required to maintain satisfactory levels of educational service. The Government should also give serious consideration to providing an indication of planned resource allocations for school boards three years in advance.*

Recommendation 7 *The Formula Review Committee should be renamed the "Education and Funding Formula Review Committee."*

Recommendation 8 *In order that there can be a relationship between the core and funding, the Department of Education staff should continue research on a definition of the core and present a discussion paper to the Minister's Advisory Committee on the Public School Program not later than January 1, 1991. The Advisory Committee should then be asked to obtain input from a wide range of publics and present recommendations to the Minister on an appropriate core of educational programs and services for Nova Scotia. The Advisory Committee should be asked to work toward a goal of completing its work in time for implementation of approved recommendations in the 1992-93 fiscal year.*

Recommendation 9 *Beginning with the 1991-92 school board fiscal year, cost-shared supplementary funding should be eliminated to the extent possible within the resources available to the Province. In the transition period until the programs and services within the core are defined, weighting factors and guaranteed minimum grants may be necessary to offset the effect on school boards of moving away from cost-shared supplementary funding.*

Recommendation 10 *When a satisfactory core has been defined and a method for funding it through mandatory provincial and municipal contributions has been established, programs or services in excess of the core should be funded fully by local contributions.*

Recommendation 11 *Pupil-teacher ratio targets should not be used as the means of determining provincial grants to school boards. The current enrolment-driven grant structure should be retained.*

Recommendation 12

(a) The property service grant should become a non-global grant commencing January 1, 1991, with the use of funds restricted to property service purposes.

(b) If a school board does not use its entire property service grant within a fiscal year, the board should be required to place the remaining amount in a special fund reserved for the board's future property service needs.

(c) The property service grant should continue to be calculated using components that recognize both gross square footage and enrolment. The trend, already begun, of reducing the relative importance of the enrolment-driven aspect of the property service grant should continue, with an eventual target of having the formula governed 70% by the gross square footage and 30% by enrolment. In determining the gross square footage for a school board, administration offices and teacher resource centres, as well as schools, should be recognized.

(d) When the enrolment of a school falls below 50% of its design capacity, the Department of Education should review the school's situation with the board and determine whether special circumstances justify the under-utilization of space. If such special circumstances cannot be demonstrated, the property service grant received by the board in respect of this school should be reduced by 50%.

Recommendation 13

(a) In recognition of the higher maintenance needs of older schools, a capital, non-global, preventive maintenance grant should be provided to each school board.

(b) The preventive maintenance grant should be based on the gross square footage of all schools that are more than ten years old. The age of schools for purposes of the grant should be determined as of September 30 of each year. Schools which have received major renovations should be dated from the completion of those renovations.

Recommendation 14 *The Department of Education should establish detailed guidelines for the use of preventive maintenance grants commencing in the 1991-92 fiscal year.*

Recommendation 15 *The current method of determining the student transportation grant should be continued for the 15-month 1991-92 school board fiscal year.*

Recommendation 16 *The Department of Education should establish a committee to review student transportation services across the province and, not later than September 30, 1991, develop a provincial standard level of service. This level of service should then be funded fully by provincial grants commencing in the 1992-93 fiscal year. The committee should include representatives of school board staff, Department of Education staff, and other persons with expertise in this area.*

Recommendation 17 *For the 1991-92 school board fiscal year, the administrative services grant should be based on enrolments, subject to a minimum grant guarantee to assist the smaller school boards. A standard level of administrative services should be defined as part of the core.*

Recommendation 18 *Separate special education funding should be maintained.*

Recommendation 19 *The Department of Education should establish a committee to undertake a comprehensive review of special education funding within a two-year time frame. The review would:*

(a) determine a basic level of special education required by school boards at both elementary and secondary levels, and determine the associated costs;

(b) determine the extraordinary services required for students with severe handicaps, the associated costs, and the feasibility and desirability of providing a separate funding component for these services;

(c) recommend reporting and auditing procedures consistent with current special education practices;

(d) recommend optimal funding procedures to cover both basic and higher cost special education in the most equitable fashion across the province;

(e) recommend appropriate means of co-ordinating the services provided to special education students by education, health and community services.

The committee should include representatives of school board special education administrators, the NSTU, the NSSBA, and the Department of Education.

Recommendation 20 *For the 1991-92 school board fiscal year, the Acadian weighting factor should remain unchanged, but each school board receiving funding through the factor should be asked to provide a detailed report of how the funding is to be used during the year.*

Recommendation 21 *The Minister's Advisory Committee on Acadian Schools should be asked to prepare, not later than September 30, 1991, recommendations for provincial guidelines on acceptable uses for funds intended to support the extra costs incurred by Acadian districts.*

Recommendation 22 *Acadian funding should be provided through a non-global grant commencing in the 1992-93 fiscal year. Any amount of the grant not spent in accordance with provincial guidelines should be recoverable by the Province.*

Recommendation 23 *Funds to support school library materials should be provided through a special purpose (non-global) grant commencing January 1, 1991. The grant should be based on an amount per student, with a minimum amount per school board that would be related to the number of schools operated by the board. The staffing of school libraries should be considered within the definition of the core.*

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Recommendation 25 *The Province should continue to provide 100% of the funding for approved, major capital construction projects. Every school board should be required to set priorities for the projects it submits for approval. Department of Education staff should continue to recommend priorities for the projects submitted for Cabinet's consideration.*

Recommendation 26 *As recommended in the Doane Raymond Report, a new accountability framework should be established that describes*

i) the Minister's information requirements;

ii) the annual reporting requirements of each board;

iii) the process and timetable for reporting; and,

iv) how existing assessment practices will fit within the new framework.

The newly named Education and Funding Formula Review Committee should be assigned overall responsibility for:

i) recommending initial accountability information requirements to the Minister;

ii) recommending modifications or amendments to the Minister's accountability information requirements; and,

iii) reviewing accountability reports and recommending, where warranted, ways of improving resource utilization and/or education delivery quality.

Recommendation 27 *The Education and Funding Formula Review Committee should develop proposals for appropriate financial and educational measures to promote accountability. In developing these measures, the Committee may find it desirable to consult with representatives of the Department of Education, parents, school boards, municipal units, teachers, education administrators, and school board chief financial officers.*

APPENDIX B

BRIEFS SUBMITTED TO THE REGIONAL REVIEW COMMITTEE

District School Boards

Nova Scotia School Boards Association
Annapolis District School Board
Antigonish District School Board
Cape Breton District School Board
Joint Submission on Supplementary Funding from
Cape Breton District School Board and Cape Breton District Local NSTU
Colchester - East Hants District School Board
Conseil Scolaire Clare Argyle School Board
Cumberland District School Board
Dartmouth District School Board
Digby District School Board
Guysborough County District School Board
Halifax County - Bedford District School Board
Halifax District School Board
Hants West District School Board
Inverness District School Board
Kings County District School Board
Lunenburg District School Board
Northside Victoria District School Board
Pictou District School Board
Queens District School Board
Joint Submission from Richmond District School Board and
Richmond Local NSTU
Shelburne County District School Board
Yarmouth District School Board

Municipal Units

Municipality of Annapolis County, Town of Bridgetown, Town of Middleton,
Town of Annapolis Royal
Municipality of the District of Argyle
Municipality of Barrington
Town of Bridgewater
Municipalities of Industrial Cape Breton
Town of Clark's Harbour
CASPO - Cumberland, Amherst, Springhill, Parrsboro, Oxford
City of Dartmouth
Municipality of the District of Digby
Municipality of Guysborough

City of Halifax
Municipality of Halifax County
Municipality of the District of Hants East
Town of Hantsport
Municipality of Inverness County
Town of Kentville
Municipality of the County of Kings
Town of Liverpool
Town of Lockeport
Municipality of the District of Lunenburg
Town of Middleton
Town of Mulgrave
Town of Pictou
Municipality of Pictou County
Town of Port Hawkesbury
Municipality of the County of Queens
Municipality of Richmond County
Municipality of the District of Shelburne
Town of Stellarton
Town of Sydney Mines
Town of Trenton
Town of Truro
Town of Westville
Town of Windsor
Municipality of Yarmouth*

Nova Scotia Teachers Union

Nova Scotia Teachers Union
Antigonish Local of the NSTU
Joint Submission from Four NSTU Locals: Cape Breton District, Richmond,Inverness and Northside Victoria
Clare Argyle Local of the NSTU
Colchester - East Hants Local of the NSTU
Cumberland District Local of the NSTU
Dartmouth District Local of the NSTU
Digby District Local of the NSTU
Guysborough County District Local of the NSTU
Halifax City Local of the NSTU
Halifax County Local of the NSTU
Hants West Local of the NSTU
Joint Submission of Richmond and Inverness Locals of the NSTU
Kings Local of the NSTU

*Oral brief only.

Lunenburg County Local of the NSTU
Pictou Local of the NSTU
Queens Local of the NSTU
Shelburne Local of the NSTU
Yarmouth Local of the NSTU

Briefs From Other Organizations and Individuals

Advocate Home and School Association and Advocate School Trustees
Annapolis East Elementary School Home and School Association
Antigonish East Community Association
Denny Blouin
Judy Campbell
Canadian Association for Community Living Colchester Branch
Canadian Association for Community Living, Kings County Branch
Canadian Association for Community Living, Halifax Branch
Canadian Parents for French, Nova Scotia
Chebucto Heights School Parent Teacher Association
Mary Clancy, M.P.*
John Coady
Colchester/East Hants Parents' Council
Comité de Parents des Écoles Acadiennes Richmond
Le Comité de Parents d'un École Acadienne De Pubnico-Ouest Argyle
Comité Parents Professeurs de l'École NDA - Chéticamp
Joan Conrad and Carol Day, Residents of Antigonish County
Continuing Education Division, Cape Breton District School Board
Continuous Learning Association of Nova Scotia
Council of Administrators of Special Education
Dr. Harley d'Entremont, President, Université Sainte-Anne
Murray Doehler
Ralph Dugas, Principal, École Jean-Marie Gay
La Fédération Acadienne de la Novelle-Écosse
Fédération des Parents Acadiens de la Nouvelle-Écosse (FPANE)
Jan Firstbrook
Halifax District Parent Teachers Association
Halifax Homeowners Association
Heather Harris
Robert Harris, Principal, Kings County Academy
Mark Hazell
I.W.K. Children's Hospital
Isle Madame Elementary-Junior High Home and School Association
Ecole Joseph Dugas, Norbert J. Comeau, Principal
Trustees of Judique Creignish Consolidated School

*Oral brief only.

Jim Keith, Superintendent, Kings County District School Board
Supervisory Staff of Kings County District School Board (3 briefs)
Laubach Literacy of Canada, Nova Scotia
Advisory Committee for Lawrencetown Consolidated School
Lawrencetown Save the School Society
Learning Disabilities Association of Nova Scotia
Honourable Neil LeBlanc, Solicitor General*
Victor LeBlanc, President, Fédération Acadienne de la Nouvelle-Écosse
LeMarchant - St. Thomas Parent Teacher Association
Liverpool Elementary Schools Board of Trustees
Ross MacIntyre, Marie MacDonald, Julia MacKinnon
Gail MacKeigan
Richie Mann, M.L.A., Richmond
Bill Mont*
Nova Scotia Federation of Home and School Association
Nova Scotia Nutrition Council
Nova Scotia School Library Association
Open Door Project of the Canadian Association for Community Living
Oxford School Parent Teacher Association
Parents Association of Halifax City Schools Music Department
Parents Association of Inverness County
Parent Associations Within the Kings County District School Board
Legal Analysis - Wayne MacKay
Parents Education Commission of Cumberland County
Parents for a Positive Approach to Learning Society, Dorothy Mason, President,
Parents of Inverness District School System
J. Peters
Pictou-Antigonish Regional Library
William Raine, Principal, Liverpool Regional High School
John Randles, President, Dartmouth Chamber of Commerce
Richelieu Club of Clare, Dr. Jean-Douglas Comeau, President
Elaine Rillie, Library Consultant, Kings County District School Board
Randi Robicheau, Chairperson, Child and Adolescent Services Committee, Valley Health Services Association, Mental Health Division
Rockingham Parent School Association
Wayne Sarty
School Administrators Association of Cumberland County
School Administrators' Association of Nova Scotia
School Library Staff Members (Lunenburg, Shelburne, Queens)
Dr. David P. Schroeder, Chairperson, Music Department, Dalhousie University
Speech - Language Pathologists and Audiologists Association

*Oral brief only.

Springhill Home and School Association
St. Catherine's School Parent Teachers Association
St. Stephen's - Highland Park Parent Teacher Associations
Teachers Association for Physical Education
Teachers of English as a Second Language, Nova Scotia
Catherine M. Thurston, Psychologist
Valley Home and School Association, Derrick Jamieson, President
George Walker
Marian Ward, Librarian, Annapolis East Elementary School
Whycocomagh Consolidated School Tustees
Windsor - West Hants Community Futures Committee
Yarmouth District School Board Adult Education